



Children's Voice

Waukesha County's Children with Special Needs Program
Monthly Newsletter
July, 2022

Special Needs Tips for Avoiding Fourth of July Sensory Overload

By: Brain Balance Centers

July 4th can mean additional sensory challenges for children with special needs. Between the festive parades and fireworks that light up the night sky with a BOOM!, the day is sure to be a sensory overload. Children with sensory sensitivities need extra attention this Independence Day to ensure that they too can enjoy the many activities of the day.

Often the day starts early with a parade complete with crowds, marching bands, brightly colored floats and candy being thrown left and right. Next comes an all day barbecue, pool part, or block party full of delicious smells and movement and laughter of family and friends. The day ends (usually past bedtime for most children) with a breathtaking fireworks display that overwhelms the senses of most who attend. This combination of events can spell disaster for children with special needs.



Whether your child struggles with a sensory processing disorder, Asperger syndrome (ASD), ADHD, or PDD, the following are tips for helping your child enjoy the Fourth of July without a major meltdown:

- ✧ **Pick and Choose:** The Fourth of July holiday offers many activities that can be stressful for a sensory sensitive child. It's important to limit their sensory exposure by limiting the day to include one or two of your favorite activities.
- ✧ **Limit the Junk Food:** At Brain Balance, we believe that proper diet and nutrition are critical elements to healthy childhood development. Children with special needs are often more affected by the sugar, gluten, and artificial ingredients found in many of the red, white, and blue colored delectable that fill the day. This often results in uncontrollable hyperactivity. Help your child avoid the meltdown by choosing healthier options like fruits and vegetables instead of candy and sugary desserts.
- ✧ **Reduce Sensory Input:** If you choose to attend the fireworks display with your sensory-sensitive child, you may consider bringing ear plugs or headphones to help reduce the volume of the sounds that accompany the big show. You may also consider picking a location that's not too crowded.
- ✧ **Set Expectations:** Let your child know how long the parade, party, or fireworks will last, so they feel more in control. It's also important to provide them with a choice to opt-out if it becomes too much.

Betty Brinn Children's Museum Sensory-Friendly Sessions

We understand a visit to the Museum can present challenges for some children. We have worked to create an event where children can enjoy our Museum experience in a calmer, quieter space. We hope our Sensory-Friendly Sessions will provide opportunities to navigate social situations, encourage peer-to-peer interaction, and develop confidence through play.

Our sessions include open-play and facilitated programming. The Museum may welcome trusted community partners to attend to provide resources and answer questions. No proof of qualification will be required.

Where: Betty Brinn Children's Museum,
929 E. Wisconsin Ave., Milwaukee
When: Tuesday, July 12, 2022; 9:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.
Wednesday, July 27, 2022; 5:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.
For Additional Information: <http://www.bbcmkids.org/playlab>



Scan me!



Español

Autism Society Southeastern Wisconsin Parent/Caregiver Support Groups

Morning Coffee Zoom Support Group

This is a time to share triumphs and frustrations while interacting with others who get the highs and lows of raising a child or supporting an adult on the Autism spectrum.

Join Ida Winters, who is a parent of three boys, one who lives with Autism Spectrum Disorder and two others who live with complex medical conditions. She serves as a Family Navigator and co-chair at The Next Step Clinic in Milwaukee. She is also a co-chair for the Milwaukee Coalition for Children's Mental Health (CCMH) and current LEND Trainee.

When: First Thursday of Every Month

Date: Thursday, July 7, 2022

Time: 9:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

For Additional Information and To Pre-Register (Required):
<https://www.asew.org/morningcoffee/>

Parents' Support Group

Join Lisa for camaraderie and conversation during our monthly gathering of parents and caregivers. Socialize and share while enjoying an hour of connection with others who truly understand. You may come away with new ideas and fresh perspectives!

This group is facilitated by staff member Lisa Ridenour, MPH, who is a mother of three children, one who lives with Autism Spectrum Disorder. She received her Master's degree in Public Health from the Zilber School of Public Health with a focus on community and behavioral health promotion and is a staunch advocate in the community for those with special needs. Lisa is a long-time volunteer with Autism Society of Southeastern Wisconsin and has recently joined the team as a Program Manager.

Note that this group alternates between morning and evening sessions. The time listed below is specific to the July session.

When: Third Thursday of Every Month

Date: Thursday, July 21, 2022

Time: 6:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

For Additional Information and to Pre-Register (Required):
<https://www.asew.org/parentssupport/>



Social Gathering for Teens with Autism

Social Gathering for teens with Autism to enjoy summer activities and socialize one day a week for four weeks. The Autism Society is offering two different four-session recreational programs for teens ages 13-18 with Autism, facilitated by Cindy Macwan, Special Education Teacher at Grafton High School and Cassie Kraemer, a paraprofessional studying education.

Some counties will allow the waiver to cover this program cost.

Session One:

Dates: June 25, June 30, July 7, July 14, 2022

Time: 6:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

Location: Greenfield Park, 2028 S. 124th St., Picnic Area #5, West Allis, WI

For Additional Information and To Register: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2022-teen-social-group-session-one-june-23-30-july-7-14-registration-327353562317?aff=ebdsoporgprofile>

Session Two:

Dates: August 4, August 11, August 18, August 25, 2022

Time: 6:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

Location: Greenfield Park, 2028 S. 124th St., Picnic Area #5, West Allis, WI

For Additional Information and To Register: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2022-teen-social-group-session-two-august-4-11-18-25-registration-327365247267?aff=ebdsoporgprofile>

iCan Bike

iCan Bike programs are for people with disabilities ages eight and up. We understand that the vast majority of people with disabilities never experience the thrill of independently riding a two-wheel

bicycle during their lifetime. For example, recent research shows that over 80% of people with Autism and 90% of people with Down Syndrome never learn to ride a two-wheel bicycle. Defying these odds is why we exist!



Hosted By: Autism Society of Southeastern Wisconsin

Dates: July 25 - July 29, 2022

Location: Nicolet High School, 6701 N. Jean Nicolet Rd, Glendale, WI

For Additional Information and to Register: <https://icanshine.org/ican-bike-milwaukee-wi/>

Accessible Nature Trails in Wisconsin

Everyone, regardless of age or ability, needs their nature fix. Learn where to go and share what you know. This is a collection of links to places you can go to enjoy nature with minimal obstacles. Wisconsin has a number of trails with minimum obstacles. Some are very easy and others are wheelchair accessible. These are trails that are either wheelchair accessible or at least, very easy walking.

https://www.accessiblenature.info/?page_id=413

Fun Summer Activities!

Assist WI

WI Dells Summer Fun for Everyone

Assist WI is located in WI Dells and assists families in having a fun experience while visiting WI Dells. It is all volunteer and fundraiser based. They will assist at most of the water parks, will take a hike, or assist with whatever adventure you want to experience as well as provide adaptive equipment for some experiences.

For Additional Information: <https://www.facebook.com/AssistWI/>

Summer Kids Dream Family Film Series

Presented by: American Family Insurance

Located: Participating Marcus Theatres or Movie Tavern Locations

Head to your nearest participating Marcus Theatre or Movie Tavern to view your favorite family flicks! Special sizing popcorn and drink deals available for the showings as well!

- ◊ *Cloudy With a Chance of Meatballs*: July 3, 4, 6, 7
- ◊ *Tom and Jerry*: July 10, 11, 13, 14
- ◊ *Sing 2*: July 17, 18, 20, 21
- ◊ *Clifford the Big Red Dog*: July 24, 25, 27, 28
- ◊ *The Croods: A New Age*: July 31, August 1, 3, 4

For Additional Information: <https://www.marcustheatres.com/marcus-specials/family-friendly-films/kids-dream-summer-film-series-2022?Name=&State=WI&SortOrder=0>

Zachariah's Acres Summer Adventure Days

Each session will have a different theme. Sign up for one or all of the Summer Adventure Days. We're intentional about nature-based experiences that allow our guests to shine and experience something that they don't get a chance to do elsewhere. Our events are designed specifically for children with special needs and provide priceless memories for years to come. Nature-based experiences are exclusively for children with special needs, and their families.

Where: Zachariah's Acres, N74W35911 Servants' Way, Oconomowoc, WI

When: July 14, 2022

Time: 9:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

For Additional Information and to Register: <https://www.zachariahsacres.org/family-events-registration>

Pick Your Own Summer Fruit In and Around Milwaukee: Berries and More!

Listed below are farms in and near Milwaukee that offer pick-your-own fruits, berries, and vegetables. See the back page of this newsletter for some great berry-picking tips!

<https://milwaukee.kidsoutandabout.com/content/pick-your-own-summer-fruit-and-around-milwaukee-berries-and-more>

Let's Craft!

DIY Non-Toxic Play-doh

By: Achievement Center of Texas

Every kid deserves the liberty of getting to create something. Working with Play-doh can really open the imagination, but store-bought Play-doh can be colorful and tempting to eat. You can make non-toxic Play-doh at home and have let the imagination soar!

What You Need:

- ◊ 2 cups of water
- ◊ 5 cups of white flour
- ◊ 5 cups of salt
- ◊ 1 tablespoon of Cream of Tartar
- ◊ 2 packages (0.13 oz) of unsweetened Kool-Aid
- ◊ 3 tablespoons of vegetable oil
- ◊ 1 medium-sized sauce pan
- ◊ 1 large mixing bowl
- ◊ 1 cooking spoon
- ◊ 1 whisk
- ◊ Cookie cutters (optional)

What You Will Do:

1. Boil the water in the sauce pan on the stove.
2. While you're waiting for the water to boil, whisk the Cream of Tartar, flour, Kool-Aid, and salt together in the large mixing bowl to create a fine powder.
3. Add the vegetable oil into the dry mix in the bowl and stir it with the cooking spoon.
4. Remove the boiled water from the stove and let it cool for a second.
5. Once the water has cooled down (still hot, but no longer boiling), add it to the mixture and stir it with the cooking spoon.
6. Sprinkle some flour onto your counter (or a large cutting board if you're trying to cut down on the mess).
7. Dump the dough onto the powdered surface and knead for a little less than 10 minutes.
8. Honor the Play-doh's namesake, and PLAY WITH IT! If you opted to use cookie cutters, you can cut it into little shapes for your child.

We Want Your Feedback!

The Children with Special Needs Program would like your feedback regarding our newsletter! What can we add? What should we change? Do you have resources to share?

Please email Michelle Lim at MLim@waukeshacounty.gov.

THANK YOU



Families caring for a child with special healthcare needs face additional challenges to their overall well-being. Each family member is impacted in different ways. The Volunteer Respite Program serves parents, children with special healthcare needs and their siblings, letting them know they are not alone.

The Volunteer Respite Program offers supports to:

- Reduce stress
- Strengthen family relationships
- Increase feelings of connection to the larger community

Milwaukee office

620 S. 76th Street, Suite 120

Milwaukee, WI 53214

Email: volunteerrespite@chwi.org

Phone: (414) 292-4161

For more information about the Children's Wisconsin Volunteer Respite Program or to make a referral, email, call or visit the website at childrenswi.org/respitecare.



Greater Milwaukee
& Waukesha County



PO Box 1997
Milwaukee, WI 53201-1997

childrenswi.org

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Volunteer Respite Program



Kids deserve the best.

[childrenswi.org/
volunteerrespite](http://childrenswi.org/volunteerrespite)



Virtual programming is open to enrolled children and their siblings age 18 years and younger. Volunteers provide connection to a child through regularly scheduled virtual visits. Activity ideas and materials are provided, with room for modification and creativity to ensure visits are personalized. Virtual programming provides an opportunity for caregivers to have a break while their children are engaged in activities. It also serves as a source of social connection and support. All volunteers have successfully completed the application process and background checks.

How families receive respite care

The eligibility criteria for a family to enroll in the program is as follows:

- Caregivers are the legal guardians of the children who will be participating in program activities.
- At least one child in the family who will be participating in program activities has an identified special healthcare need.
- Children age 0 to 12, whose needs/ behaviors are able to be safely met in a large group setting are eligible to attend community respite events.
- All children age 18 and younger are eligible to participate in virtual programming.

Program offerings

Community Respite Events are attended by enrolled children and their siblings ages 0-12. Children are matched with a volunteer, and together they are engaged in a variety of fun activities in a supervised, safe community setting. Events are held at various locations with the support of community partners and volunteers. While children enjoy a day of fun, their caregivers are able to use the gift of time to engage in activities they may not be able to when providing direct care to a child.

How you can help

Volunteer

Give the gift of time to gain valuable experience and help strengthen families in our community. Our volunteers range from high school-age students to older adults. To learn more about the volunteer requirements, opportunities and the application process, visit childrenewi.org/volunteerrespite.

Donate

We welcome donations of supplies, services and event sponsorship to help this program continue to grow and support families in our community.





PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY:

- The child must be between 0 and 21 years of age.
- The child must reside in the State of Wisconsin.
- The child must have a physical or developmental special need.

WANT TO LEARN MORE?

If you believe your child could benefit from Variety's programs, visit www.varietzwi.org or call 262.777.2090.



Variety - the Children's Charity of Wisconsin

12425 Knoll Road, Suite 120

Elm Grove, WI 53122

Phone | 262.777.2090

Fax | 262.777.2095

Email | contact@varietzwi.org

www.varietzwi.org



variety
the children's charity
of wisconsin

Variety Programs
GUIDE



Dedicated to enriching the lives of children with physical or developmental special needs and their families

ABOUT VARIETY

Variety – the Children's Charity of Wisconsin began in 1935. Our mission is enriching the lives of children with physical or developmental special needs and their families.

Variety **serves** children age 21 and younger who have a diagnosed or demonstrated physical or developmental special need.

Our **vision** is that Variety's Children can actively participate and experience the joys of childhood.

We **believe** that all children should have a limitless future.



HOW VARIETY HELPS

Variety Freedom Program

The Freedom Program helps children with physical disabilities gain mobility, confidence, independence and access by funding mobility and other enabling equipment.

Variety Care Program

The Care Program partners with agencies delivering specific supportive services to children with physical or developmental special needs and their families. Working together, we improve the health, wellness and quality of life for children.

Variety Discover Program

The Discover Program focuses on education, experiences and play by providing fun, free family outings and funding for adaptive educational and communication technology.

Chatter Matters! Communication Camp

Offered in partnership with University of Wisconsin-Whitewater, Chatter Matters! Communication Camp gives children a voice by teaching families of nonverbal children to use a communication device in a fun traditional camp setting.



PROGRAM FAQs

How do I apply for a grant from Variety?

Download a grant application at www.varietzwi.org/family-application. To have an application mailed to you, email contact@varietzwi.org or call 262.777.2090.

When may grant applications be sent in and reviewed?

Grant applications are accepted year-round. Completed applications are reviewed and replied to within 90 days or less.

What items does Variety fund?

Family and equipment examples:

Adaptive bicycles, walkers, wheelchairs, medical strollers, lifts, ramps, vehicle modifications and more. Items not covered include, but are not limited to, tandem bikes, therapy rooms and pools, drop floor vehicle conversions, the purchase of a vehicle, beds, fences, and home modifications that change the interior structure of the home.

Agency grants:

Variety also considers granting to agencies delivering specific supportive services to children with physical or developmental special needs. For more details call 262-777-2090.

Are there income restrictions?

Families are required to provide proof of income as part of their Variety application for equipment grants. While income is a consideration, there is no specific income level at which funding is guaranteed or denied. There are no income restrictions for the Discover Program or Chatter Matters.

Who may attend Discover Program events?

Discover Program events are for the child with special needs and their immediate family members. This includes parents or guardians, brothers and sisters and does not include extended family members (cousins, aunts, uncles, grandparents).



Variety – the Children's Charity of Wisconsin
 12425 Knoll Road, Suite 120, Elm Grove, WI 53122
 Phone 262-777-2090 Fax 262-777-2095
www.VarietyWi.org

VARIETY DISCOVER PROGRAM APPLICATION

Variety's Discover Program provides fun, free outings and experiences for children with physical or developmental special needs, and their immediate family members. This program provides memorable, educational, and play experiences which strengthen family bonds, create lifelong memories, and allow children and their families to experience many new activities each year. To participate in Discover Program events, please fill out this form and email it to contact@varietywi.org.

Child's name: _____ Gender: ☐ M ☐ F Birth Date: _____

Child's special need: _____

Does the child use: ☐ Manual Wheelchair ☐ Power Wheelchair ☐ Walker ☐ AFO's/Braces

Race/Ethnicity of Child (for demographic purposes only):

- ☐ White/Caucasian ☐ Black/African American ☐ Hispanic or Latino
☐ Native American or American Indian ☐ Asian/Pacific Islander ☐ Other (please list) _____

Home address: _____

City: _____ County: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Name of parent(s)/legal guardian(s) & relationship: _____

Parent/Guardian's e-mail address: _____

Parent/Guardian's phone numbers: Home _____ Cell _____ Other _____

How were you referred to Variety: _____

Language(s) Spoken by Family: _____

What types of activities does your family like to do together?

What types of things would you like to do as a family that you currently do not?

The following questions are for demographic purposes only

Household/Family Income Level:

- ☐ Less than \$10,000 ☐ \$10,000 - \$29,999 ☐ \$30,000 - \$59,999 ☐ \$60,000 - \$89,999
☐ \$90,000 - \$99,999 ☐ \$100,000 - \$149,999 ☐ \$150,000 - \$199,999 ☐ \$200,000 or more

Number of People in Household/Family: _____

Race/Ethnicity of Family:

- ☐ White/Caucasian ☐ Black/African American ☐ Hispanic or Latino
☐ Native American or American Indian ☐ Asian/Pacific Islander ☐ Other/Multiple (please list)



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PERMISSION FORM AND PHOTO RELEASE

Variety's Discover Program events are for all members of the **IMMEDIATE** family of the child with a physical or developmental special need (i.e., parents and siblings who live in the home).

Please list all members of the household (children and adults) who may attend Variety's Discover Program events:

Variety Child's Name: _____ Birth Date: _____

Name: _____ Relation to child above: _____ Birth Date: _____

Name: _____ Relation to child above: _____ Birth Date: _____

Name: _____ Relation to child above: _____ Birth Date: _____

Name: _____ Relation to child above: _____ Birth Date: _____

Name: _____ Relation to child above: _____ Birth Date: _____

Name: _____ Relation to child above: _____ Birth Date: _____

Name: _____ Relation to child above: _____ Birth Date: _____

Name: _____ Relation to child above: _____ Birth Date: _____

Name: _____ Relation to child above: _____ Birth Date: _____

Name: _____ Relation to child above: _____ Birth Date: _____

Permission/Waiver: I hereby grant permission for my child(ren) to participate in Variety's Discover Program events. I recognize that unanticipated situations and problems can arise during activities that are not reasonably within the control of Variety staff, including volunteers. I therefore agree to release and hold harmless Variety – the Children's Charity of Wisconsin, its agents, officers, employees, and volunteers from any and all liability, claims, suits, demands, judgments, costs, interest and expense (including attorney's fees and costs) arising from such activities, including any accident or injury to the child or myself and the costs of medical services.

Photo Release: I give permission to Variety – the Children's Charity of Wisconsin to use my or my child(ren)'s name, and/or any photograph or image taken of me or my child(ren) during Variety Discover Program events, whether recorded or transferred to video tape, slides, photographs, internet, or any other form of media for use in any promotional materials, publications and/or press releases. I understand that I will not be compensated for my time or the rights to use the image(s) or its copyright or copyright issues. I agree that it is not necessary for Variety or anyone else to contact me prior to releasing any information authorized by this release. I agree to release, on behalf of myself or my child(ren), Variety from and against any and all claims, of any type, which arise from or are related to Variety's use, distribution or disclosure of any photographs, films, videotapes, electronic recording or other information regarding myself or my child(ren).

Parent/Legal Guardian Name	Signature	Date
Parent/Legal Guardian Name	Signature	Date

10 Tips for Berry Picking with Kids

By: KidsOutAndAbout.com

Berry picking is a delicious adventure that helps children understand where their food comes from and yields plenty of sweetness to share. It can also be challenging, requiring some diligence and patience. Here are a few tips to help you have plenty of fun with your berries.

1. Berry farms aren't the supermarket.

Even when local farms have picking schedules posted on their website, it's often best to call ahead, because conditions change quickly. Sometimes a rush of people will pick the place bare or weather will make previous estimates iffy. Some farms will have a mechanism in place frequent updates, like a "berry hotline," an email list, or a Facebook page. If you have a local favorite, make sure that they know you want to hear about it when the berries are ripe.

2. Know when to go.

Pick the chilliest day possible or start early, because it always feels like you're baking in the sun. If you're a stay-at-home parent, this is your chance to enjoy an activity that will definitely be quieter on a weekday than on the weekend - as long as the farm is open on a weekday. Fabulous, right?

3. Plan for sun.

Berries grow well in sunny locations, so you'll want to wear sunscreen and bring hats. In fact, put sunscreen on before you drive to the farm, so that it has a chance to soak in. That way, it won't get all over your delicious berries.

4. Bring extra baskets or plastic bags.

Almost any pick-your-own place will provide containers, but some make you pay for the container itself separately. If you're going with multiple children and you don't want to buy multiple quarts of berries, it's nice to have extra containers because *of course* every child wants to hold their own container. As containers begin to fill up, consolidate the berries into another container that is sitting on the ground. Otherwise, of course, your child will drop the whole thing as soon as it's completely full.

5. Bring supplies for kids who need to take a break.

A blanket or towel to sit on is essential, and snacks and water or a picnic lunch (if allowed by the farm) are lovely, too. A sling or carrier for the littlest ones is a great option to have, with bonus points if you've perfected the transfer from sling to shady blanket. If you have multiple children with you, bring a couple of books. Because *someone* will be sick and tired of picking while another child will be passionately devoted to removing every last berry from the bushes in her row.

6. Prepare your pickers.

Spend the drive to the farm reminding your child(ren) of all the rules because it will be difficult to focus once you arrive and see all those

glorious berries. Nice reminders: strawberries and raspberries should be *red*, blueberries should be blue (expect to repeat this instruction roughly two hundred times, and offer up specific examples). Bees won't bother you if you don't bother them, so don't swat. Don't eat the berries until they're home and washed. Or, don't eat the berries without checking with Mom first. Or, eat one berry for every ten picked. Of, don't obviously smear your *entire* face with berries directly in front of someone who works on the farm. Seriously, some berry-eating along the way is part of the charm, but if your children are eating quite a bit, plan to add a couple of bucks extra onto your total when you pay at the end. Because we all want to support local farms, right?

7. Easy kitchen projects are part of the fun.

Kids love to cook with their harvest, and you can cede control to them almost completely by just letting them make a simple tart. The easiest, most non-cooking option here is to supply some prepared pie crust, powdered sugar, and whipped cream in a can. Let the kids fold berries into pie crust tarts, then sprinkle them with sugar and/or dollop with whipped cream. Other favorites in our house are adding berries to homemade ice pops and smoothies. Delicious!

8. The berries won't last long.

Chances are, they'll be eaten quickly. But if your pickers were more diligent than hungry, keep in mind that these berries won't stay nice for as long as the rough-and-ready (and, let's be clear: *inferior*) varieties you'll buy at a supermarket. It's simplest to freeze: Just rinse the berries, gently pat them dry, and lay them on a pan in the freezer for a couple of hours. Then transfer them to a sealable plastic bag.



9. Plan your next berry fix.

Did everyone have fun? Then mark your calendar for the estimated date of the next crop of berries, consider

planting a berry bush in your yard, or point out a new kind of berry or fruit that your child might want to taste the next time you visit a local market. You've given them a taste of berryliciousness.

10. Bond over a berry book.

There's always a way to incorporate reading into any adventure. Read these books about berries before, during, and after the experience to connect the fun of a hands-on activity to the joy of reading.

- ◉ *Jamberry*, by Bruce Degan
- ◉ *Blueberries for Sal*, by Robert McCloskey
- ◉ *The Berry Book*, by Gail Gibbons
- ◉ *Berry Magic*, by Teri Sloat

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